

Buddy Ebsen is selling his rare coins

By Roger Boye

Television actor Buddy Ebsen—one of the country's most famous coin buffs—will be the center of attraction this week when much of his collection goes on the auction block in Los Angeles.

"I've enjoyed my coins for 10 years and now it's time to do other things, such as travel," Ebsen said recently. "I hope the new owners get as much pleasure out of the coins as I have."

Ebsen's collection includes dozens of rarities, such as a U.S. \$4 gold piece that may be worth \$150,000 or more. Ebsen said his interest in the hobby developed "quite by accident" after he bought a rare coin for a friend.

"I learned that with rising inflation, coins are a fabulous way to preserve wealth," said Ebsen, who played the star detective on "Barnaby Jones" and Jed Clampett on "Beverly Hillbillies."

"Coins are loaded with history. When you hold something made 600 years before Jesus was born, you think of all the people who touched it over the years. That's what makes coin collecting an exciting growth experience," he said.

Ebsen plans to attend part of the three-day auction, such as Tuesday's sale of U.S. gold pieces.

Scores of hobbyists are expected to bid on the lots consigned by Ebsen and others, said a spokesman for Superior Stamp and Coin Co. Inc., of Beverly Hills, which is conducting the sale.

Meanwhile, Ebsen is touting the investment potential of foreign and ancient coins because he believes new collectors will shun expensive U.S. rarities. (Superior will sell Ebsen's foreign and ancient coins at auction during the week of June 7.)

"There are tremendous bargains to be had in those two areas," he said. "I think they will appreciate tremendously in price as U.S. coins did in the middle and late '70s."

Ebsen advises novices to "stick with quality coins" and to "pick a dealer you respect and other people respect and stick with him."